

fair share. Most Americans think it is unacceptable for those at the top to pay less in taxes than teachers and firefighters. God bless the rich—I have nothing against them—but I applaud the President's proposal for making sure the ultrarich chip in to growing our country.

Finally, I commend the President for releasing a budget that honors our Nation's promise to Ukraine while keeping Americans around the world safe from harm.

Now compare the President's budget, President Biden's budget, to the bewildering vision laid out by Senate Republicans in recent weeks.

While Democrats want to lower costs for American families, Republicans are openly calling on raising taxes on most Americans.

Yesterday, the junior Senator from Florida went on FOX News Sunday to deny this part of his plan, only for the anchor—the FOX anchor—to remind everyone watching: “No, it's in the plan.”

While Democrats want to strengthen Medicare and make healthcare more affordable, Republicans have resurrected calls to repeal healthcare and even possibly put Medicare on the chopping block. And lest anyone forget, a few months ago, the junior Senator from Florida, in another example, openly said inflation was a “gold mine”—a gold mine—for the Republican Party, a gold mine. People are hurt; it is a gold mine for the Republican Party.

Just how callous, how retrograde, how backward is the Republican vision for America? raising taxes on working people? cheerleading inflation? stoking divisions and even putting things like Medicare at risk while pushing tax breaks for the ultrarich? If that is their pitch to the American people, God help Republicans.

In the meantime, I thank President Biden for releasing a strong, optimistic, and responsible plan that will build on the historic recovery our Nation has seen in the past year.

Senate Democrats will work with the administration to put these proposals into concrete legislation in the weeks and months to come.

H.R. 4521

Madam President, now on the competition bill, it is an important day here on the Senate floor. In a few hours, we will hold a vote on final passage for the bipartisan jobs and competitiveness legislation many of us have worked on for over a year.

For the information of all, today's action will come in two steps. We will first vote on cloture on the substitute amendment, which contains the text of the Senate-passed United States Innovation and Competition Act. Then we will proceed to final passage. Both votes are set at a 60-vote threshold, and I am confident that we will wrap up this important work by the end of the day.

As I have said since the beginning of this process, the actions we are taking

on the Senate floor will enable us to enter a conference committee with the House, which we need in order to finalize our competitiveness bill. I believe we can see a conference committee initiated by the end of this work period.

If enacted, I believe this legislation will be one of the most important accomplishments of the 117th Congress. This bill, for all its provisions, is really about two big things: creating more American jobs and lowering costs for American families.

It will help lowering costs by making it easier to produce critical technologies here at home, like semiconductors. It will create more jobs by bringing manufacturing back from overseas.

And just as importantly, this legislation will fuel another generation of American innovation. Whichever nation is the first to master the technologies of tomorrow will reshape the world in its image. America cannot afford to come in second place when it comes to technologies like 5G, AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, bioengineering, and so much more.

This bill is a necessary step toward securing the bright future of American ingenuity, which has always helped us lead the way.

I want to thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for everything they have done to help us each this moment. It has been a long, hard road, but almost every Member of this Chamber has had a hand in putting this bill together. It was a blend of various proposals across various committees, and it was a product of a healthy amendment process both in committee and on the floor.

We are, hopefully, just a few hours away from reaching the next important step in the process, putting us on a glidepath to initiating a conference committee with the House.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, on COVID, over the past few weeks, our country has made major strides in the fight against COVID. Cases, deaths, and hospitalizations are coming down and staying down. Schools and communities are opening up and staying open.

But in order to preserve this progress, Congress must now act to make sure that our communities, our healthcare workers, and our families have the resources they need to keep our country open. Sadly, public funding for COVID relief is in critical danger of actually running out.

That is why right now I am working with my Republican colleagues to reach a bipartisan agreement on another COVID-19 package. The White House has been unambiguous in saying they need more funding with all due haste, so that is what we are working to secure ASAP.

A new bipartisan bill will pay for all the tools we know work best against new variants: It will ensure we have enough vaccines; enough testing; enough therapeutics, which do amazing

things if you get them in time; and support our schools to stay open in a safe way. We also need to do more to boost global vaccination efforts and support cutting-edge research into new vaccines.

We already know what to do in order to keep life going as normally as possible should another variant threaten to unravel our progress. Now we simply need to secure the funding to make sure we can keep schools open and our communities as safe as possible. If you don't go for the funding and a new variant hits and it gets bad, shame on you. Everyone should be for this.

Over the next few days, we will keep negotiating with our Republican colleagues in good faith. While we are not there yet, talks have been encouraging, and I hope we can reach an agreement very soon.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 7108 and H.R. 6968

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand that there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6968) to prohibit the importation of energy products of the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 7108) to suspend normal trade relations treatment for the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar on the next legislative day.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.
I yield the floor.

AMERICA CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANUFACTURING, PRE-EMINENCE IN TECHNOLOGY, AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH ACT OF 2022—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, during the first few months of President Biden's term, he has tried to brush off the surge of illegal immigrant apprehensions as nothing more than a seasonal trend. But after month 6, seasonal migration was no longer a valid explanation for what turned out to be a record-breaking year.

This border surge wasn't by accident. President Biden pledged to enact an open border agenda by halting border wall construction, reversing successful Trump-era immigration policies, and hamstringing our law enforcement officers. It was one promise he has kept.